

The Tactful Art of Asking for Online Reviews

By Welton Hong

Did you know that customer reviews factor into how well your site and business perform on Google's market-dominant search engine?

More reviews can boost your placement in page rank or help ensure Google lists your business in map or Local 3-Pack results. A lack of reviews opens the door for your competition to take these spots and connect first with organic searchers.

And Google isn't the only entity who relies on reviews. Potential clientele put stock in what other people say about your business.

More than two-thirds of consumers read online reviews before visiting a business or making a purchasing decision, with many trusting online reviews even more than recommendations from friends.

But in an industry where you always must be cognizant of a fine, tactful line, how do you ask for online reviews from families you've served?

It's certainly something funeral homes and other death care providers must consider carefully, but it's not impossible to win reviews from families who were happy with the service you provided.

I've highlighted some approaches to asking for reviews, including the pros and cons of each, along with some thoughts about how those in the death care industry can approach each practice.

Asking in person for a review later is a common approach; in retail establishments, individuals might say something like, "If you're happy with our service today, please consider leaving us a positive review on Google."

While that type of obvious inquiry is likely to ring too commercial for many death care providers (and seem out of place when you're wrapping up with a grieving family), you can ask for reviews tactfully.

The best practice might be to wait until the family expresses satisfaction with your service. You can respond with sincerity and appreciation for the praise while mentioning how it's helpful to your business if families leave those comments online. You can also note that you'll have more opportunity to help other local families in need thanks to a positive review.

To avoid overwhelming family members who are likely dealing with a lot of information and emotions in the moment, ask if you can email them later with instructions for leaving a review.

The benefit of the in-person, ask is that you can frame it to meet the personality of the family. You can also choose when to ask (and when not to), depending on the situation.

Some businesses provide a kiosk for on-the-spot reviews or have a policy to ask customers to leave reviews via their own mobile devices immediately. I don't recommend this for death care providers for a number of reasons.

First, when a bunch of reviews all come from the same location (such as a computer inside your business or via your guest Wi-Fi network), it can look suspicious to Google or other sites. That can get those reviews deleted. Second, I'm sure you agree that pressuring families to leave reviews at their time of need or in the aftermath of shock or grief simply isn't an appropriate procedure. You might alienate



Welton Hong

CONTINUED ON PAGE A23

Glass Remembrance

Introducing the new Hurricane Candle Holder & Photo Wreaths by Glass Remembrance. Both contain a small portion of the cremated remains blown into the glass.

740-877-0967
www.glassremembrance.com sales@glassremembrance.com

SCI Announces Fourth Quarter Results and Increases Quarterly Cash Dividend

HOUSTON, TX— Service Corporation International (NYSE: SCI) reported results for the fourth quarter 2018.

Tom Ryan, the Company's Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, commented, "We delivered a solid quarter as we closed out 2018 and are pleased to report an 8% increase in adjusted earnings per share. Double-digit growth in our preneed cemetery sales production drove cemetery profit higher. This along with increased profit from newly acquired businesses were somewhat offset by lower funeral segment profit. Tax planning and tax reform also had a favorable impact for the quarter.

"Looking ahead to 2019, we believe we are well positioned to deliver solid results. These results are all made possible by our greatest asset, our 24,000 associates. Their hard work, dedication, and focus on our client families are what makes this company so strong. Looking forward, we are confident that our solid operating platform and healthy financial condition will allow us to continue to grow revenue, leverage our scale, and deploy capital wisely to enhance shareholder value."

CONTINUED ON PAGE A24

The Tactful Art of Asking for Online Reviews

Continued from Page A21

families or, at the very least, cause them to leave a rushed and confusing review.

A third common tactic for requesting reviews is emailing clientele later. This actually can work well for funeral homes and other businesses in the industry, as long as you follow best practices for collecting clientele email and getting permission to send messages.

You might consider including the request for a review tastefully in a follow-up email about services provided. Let the next of kin know you were honored to serve their family and loved one's memory. Offer to perform any final services that might be necessary (such as providing documentation necessary for Veterans' benefits). And then include a short request for an online review at the person's convenience.

While you're considering a plan for asking for reviews that fits your clientele and your brand, here's something else to consider:

Not every review has to hit it out of the park.

A larger sampling of reviews conveys legitimacy, even if the overall average rating for your company isn't five stars. A large number of reviews with an overall 4.3 rating tends to be far more influential than a few reviews with an overall 4.8 rating.

That's true both in terms of human perception and in Google ranking: Higher numbers of reviews help you get better placement on Google.

And because people look to reviews to get a "trusted" read on your death care business, you'll want to ensure you have at least 20 reviews to help persuade potential clientele you're worth considering.

Wilton Long is the founder of Ring Ring Marketing® and a leading expert in creating case generation from online to the phone line. He is the author of Making Your Phone Ring with Internet Marketing for Funeral Homes. For more information, visit www.FuneralHomeProfits.com.

Caring for every need, every day.

NMS



NATIONAL MORTUARY SHIPPING & CREMATION

800-321-0185

We Are Available to Take Your Call 24/7

Experts In:

Domestic & International Shipping · Cremation
Flight Booking · Embalming · Livery · Airline Transfers · Graveside Services
Airline & Shipping Requirements · Consulate Paperwork & Translation

Download Our Free App



Download for iPhone



Download for Android

Our app makes it easier than ever to give new death calls, setup pre-arranged shipping and cremation calls, request price quotes, and more.

natlmortuaryshipping.com

 Like Us On Facebook! 